

## Identifying *Brachypodium sylvaticum* (slender false brome)

Jim Johnson, San Francisco Watershed Council

January 2004

Slender false brome is a perennial bunch grass native to Eurasia and North Africa which stays green throughout the year under favorable conditions. It can be found growing in sun or shade, in dry or moist areas and up to 3500 feet in elevation. Individual bunches in an infestation increase in size until they coalesce to form a solid mat 12 to 18 inches high which overwhelms smaller plants and can prevent the germination of seeds. As a young plant *Brachypodium sylvaticum* may appear like a many-legged spider spread out over the ground. As it matures it assumes a gracefully nodding form in both leaf and flower. This gives a strong visual cue which draws the eye. I will not describe the floral parts here as there are vegetative features, present at all times of the year, which will give a positive identification of *Brachypodium sylvaticum*:

1) The leaf blade is entirely flat and lax, slightly less than 1/2 inch wide and a distinctive bright green. When held up to the sky, a fine, even fringe of hairs is easily seen around edge of the leaf.



2) The leaf sheath, which joins the leaf blade to the culm and surrounds it, is open and freely releases the culm when pulled back. The sheath is thickly clothed with hairs like those fringing the leaf blade, the hairs numerous at the collar.

